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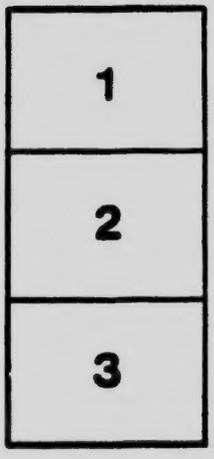
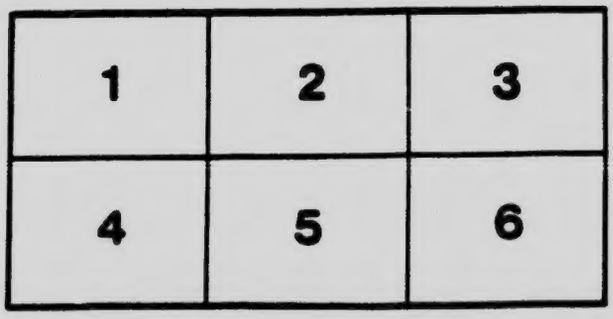




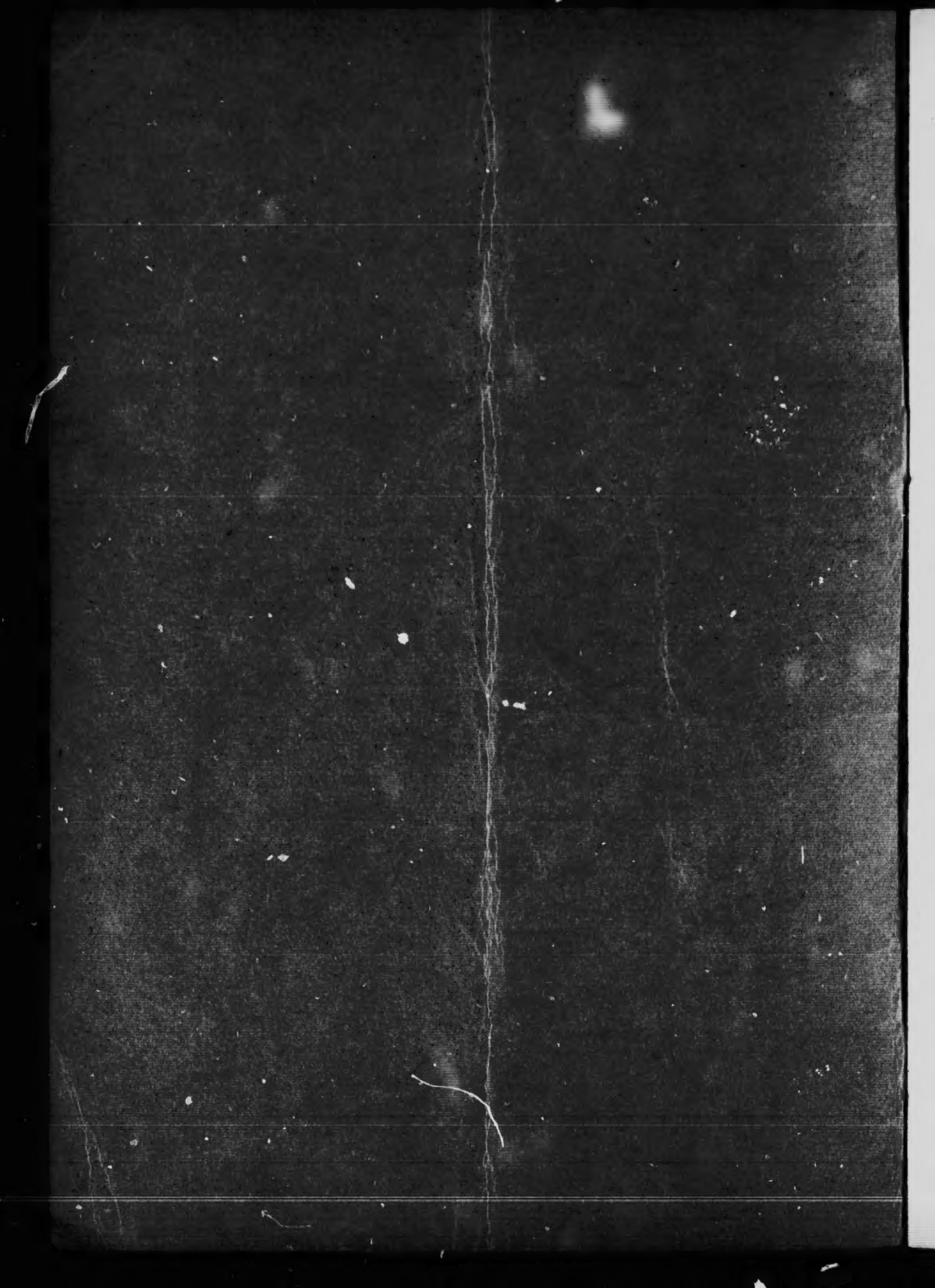
TRUE CANADIANISM

AN APPEAL
by
F. Merner

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
—Scott

FOURTH EDITION

Revised and Enlarged



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TRUE CANADIANISM

An Appeal

by

F. MERNER

PREFACE

More and more, the various attitudes of Canadians, upon questions, tendencies and movements that in recent years have come prominently to the surface in the field of Canadian politics, and are bound to affect directly the future of our beloved country, are being revealed.

These verses were written before the beginning of the present shocking occurrences in Europe and the consequent important crisis in the affairs of the British Empire, and of the whole world.

They are now sent forth with confidence as an urgent patriotic appeal to all classes of our people. They will likewise be found to contain well-meant and timely criticism of political theories and policies, which, it is felt, must prove retrogressive instead of progressive, in our national life.

To learn to estimate at their full worth the great blessings of citizenship in this fair Dominion and to live worthily up to the responsibilities of that citizenship, is the sacred duty of all Canadians; and it is only upon our meeting and fulfilling these obligations faithfully that we become really capable of forming a proper conception of what the future position of Canada should be, or of the part she should play in any possible reorganization of British states.

It should be our aim to attain to the undimmed altitude and clearness of this conception. That the best means to such an end will be found to consist in uniting all the elements of our mixed population under the inspiriting banner of genuine patriotism and the appealing watchword of true Canadianism, must surely be apparent to every thinking person, and is the firm conviction of the writer.

PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION

The preface to the original edition of "True Canadianism" sets forth, in broad outline, its aim and purpose, and is for that reason, retained in the present edition.

The writer is glad to repeat here previous expressions of gratitude for the appreciative reception of this booklet, and cherishes the confident hope that this, the fourth edition, now issued in revised and somewhat enlarged form, may meet with the continued wholesome approval of all sections of the Canadian public.

SYNOPSIS

Indifference—Pseudo-Loyalty at Elections—Dream of Imperialists — Progressive Canadianism — Fallacies of Would-be Nation-Builders—Deceptiveness of Trade Restrictionists—Real Patriotism versus Vague Imperialism—Call to ... tical Duty—Evils of Centralizing Naval Policy—Urgent ...eed of Patriotic Watchfulness and Zeal—Parliamentary Incompetence and Greed—Arrogance of Privilege—Warning to Rulers—Hope and Confidence in True Statesmanship—Vision of the Future.

TRUE CANADIANISM

—AN APPEAL

Some funny things in life we see;
For instance, what could stranger be
Than living on from day to day,
With all one's notions set to stay
As they were in the long ago,
Instilled into one's pate, you know.
But what is stranger still and sad
With heaps of learning to be had,
To see the bulk of human kind
Just doze away, and never mind
What's going on and what is not,
Whether gospel's preached or tommyrot.

First, let me say this is the land
In which I gladly take my stand;
It is the land that gave me birth,
The dearest of all lands on earth.
Well, since I must be somewhat short
I'd like to know what this cohort,
That comes to tell of Empire saved,
And those among us who have raved
Of 'loyalty' and 'voters brave'
That went to polls the realm to save,
Do want of me and want of you,—
Who'll tell in speech that's plain and true?

These voters would do well, I ween,
To study things a bit more keen
During the time when talk and shout
For party in and party out,
Suspended is till next campaign;
That is the time to knowledge gain.
Yes, you would be, indeed, surprised,
How little truth is advertised,
When party in and party out
Engage in hot periodic bout;
Hence, it behooves us to inform
Ourselves what's best in calm or storm.

Now, here's a thing that puzzles me,
And I'm 'Canuck' if one there be,
What all this pother is about,
And why so many talk and spout
Of how 'tis wickedness to claim
A nation's place, a nation's name;
Colonial we must be forever,
For fear that we a tie do sever—
A tie they wish still stronger made,
By law's compelling power and aid;
So we should be—sad to relate—
A servile 'unit' of a 'state,'—
A cog, forsooth, as it would seem,
In a mighty, fearsome war-machine.
But all this talk of closer ties,
A mere fond dream, methinks, implies,
And, to suppose the thing is done
By giving up one single one
Of our own rights or our own powers
To manage things distinctly ours,
For government by central rule,
Is planning fit for boy at school.
Why can't you wait, you brave Jingoes,
Till this great thing spontaneously grows?
'Tis most unwise to force a thing,—
Just dream a while and fate will fling
The plan that simple is and wise,
All ready made before your eyes;
You dear old muffs, what's all the hurry?
Do you not see there's ample worry
For us right here, to make our land
What it should be and what for stand?

Now, friend, wake up and play the man;
The fair horizon try to scan,
Of this our grand, our splendid land,
And study well how we should band
Our people into nation strong,
So we shall stand ere very long,
A country virile, great and free;
God grant that this our aim may be.

Please pardon me if I don't feel
No tongue but English can reveal
The love we bear for Canada,—
Thought fit for darkest Africa;
I hold two tongues are better far
Than one; does Welsh mar Britain's star?

Now, sir, the burden of this song
Is that we all do here belong;
Of course, my friend, I know you well,
Know you do love to boast and tell
How all your veins are one great flood
Of rich superior British blood;
'Tis well, but please do not forget
That someone else did us beget,
Who came of other stock; yet are
We willing quite, to help the car
Of progress on and on and on,
And here's our hand and oath thereon.

Mayhap, you much would like to know
Who thus doth here his whistle blow;
Well friend, you see, it's just like this,
My ev'ry drop of blood is Swiss,
And proud I am right through and through
—As proud, I ween, dear friend, as you—
My fathers came from such fair land
Of freedom and of scenes so grand;
Some day perhaps to you I'll tell
How once to my good fortune fell,
To visit that fine mountain-land,
Sweet, lovely, charming Switzerland.

Of other tongues I something know,
To my good mother I this owe;
I've sought somewhat of French to reach,
Nor did neglect the Saxon speech,
The tongue, of course, we all should learn
To whatsoever else we turn,
For that's the language of this land
Of maple leaves, by zephyrs fanned,—
—This land—rich gift of bounteous God—
—No fairer hath man's foot e'er trod;

Whose stalwart sons can do and dare,
Face hell of war, with valor rare,
Whilst deeds of noble service crown
Her daughters blithe, with fit renown.

But let us now resume our task
Of proving what these great men ask,
And show that we are in the right,
To spurn their ways of making tight
The tie that us to Britain binds;
And search for what their judgment blinds.
Well, first of all, what they pretend
Is Britain's need, they make no end
Of telling us; our own good land,
They seem to think, should naught demand,
But humbly bow to this great scheme
They're hatching out as by machine.
Just think, for instance, what they say,
The policy for future day
Should be; no more, we're told, should we
Our own affairs wait on; with glee
We ought to hail a tariff wall
Against the world, alike for all
The wide-strewn realm, and duties fixed
All members of the same betwixt.
Yes, that's the scheme, as we can learn,
Naught else, it seems, can they discern,
These self-elected guardians wise
Of Britain's star and Britain's skies;
And this grand work of theirs besides,
No other thing their time divides,
Except all persons to malign
And as disloyal to define,
Who don't approve their scheme so grand,
For future of the Empire planned.

The thought that sea the land divides
In no bright brain now longer bides,
Say they; you sure aware must be,
How plainly yon great spreading sea
No countries e'er doth separate
But joins them into one great state;
I hear you say this cannot be;
Go hear them talk and you shall see.

Yes, this with serious mien and speech,
One of these sages I heard preach;
And heartily some did applaud
The utt'rance wild of that old fraud;
The senate yet adorn he may
While you and I toil day by day.

'Twere better far that such as he,
Yea, this whole crowd that guides would be
In building nations, were made feel
That silence would for country's weal
More wholesome be; and we'd advise
That 'twould be well some place devise
Where they could sit and theorize
And hug and fondle what they prize;
Confine them in some institution
Where they could bootless, vain solution
Of empire problems, carry on,
And childish schemes there dote upon;
To there indulge their foolish ruse
Would none of our good folks confuse,
For there they could not sow much seed
Of what our people would mislead,
But would be more like wise old hens
Just cackling, cackling in their pens:
Unhindered then our destiny,
We could pursue more happily.
To 'oslerize' the prattling clan
Was also a suggested plan;
But that the public estimate
That we do share the same hard fate,
Might chance; wherefore we 'give the wink'
That plan's too radical—we think.

When playful jest is put aside
We know these stern, cold facts abide:
Men said, not distant is the day,
That we ne'er could with Empire stay
Unless we cramped ourselves, delayed
Our progress and our growth in trade;
Were people told on every hand,
That motherland did this demand.
A multitude believed it true;
My friend, if, thus entrapped, thou too,

By deception's subtle art misled,
Wast overcome by foolish dread,
Or if with thee aught lingers still,
That doth with apprehension fill,
Or if thou still uncertain art,
'Twas but a scheming faction's part
For vile advantage to be gained
For selfish ends through truth profaned,—
O bro ˙ˆer, I beseech you shake,
Shake it off, e'en though your heart do break,
Shake it off, this sad delusion great
And learn to shun it and to hate.

Say, why should we here creep and squirm
To make the British tie more firm!
'Tis not to force, true love will bow;
Ye prophets false, avaunt! We vow
Your doleful whines but phantoms are
That all bright hopes would blight and mar;
In your vile, craven attitudes,
Tell not to us your platitudes
'Bout loyalty; for traitors they
Who would, like you, true progress stay.

When I began 'twas but to write
And here, with my fond pen indite
A playful rhyme with humor blent;
But ah! my heart, with sorrow rent,
With so greeat indignation swelled
At thought of how men oft are held,
Through ignorance and through deceit,
From knowing what's for country meet,
That to refrain, methought were sin
If I could state aught good herein,
Or could aught wrong, born of fear or guile,
Expose and here condemn meanwhile.

Now friends, that we be patriots all,
You will admit, what'er befall,
But did you ever stop to think
That we should all our diff'rence sink
And try to make fair Canada
The brightest land of this era;

And you, good man of other blood
Than British, how can you well bud
Into a patriot strong when naught
But what concerns the whole is taught?
The Empire is continually
To us portrayed alone to be
All that should now the heart inspire
Or call forth praise by song or lyre;
Indeed, to think imperially
Doth now seem more and more to be
Of weight, but of a land so fair
As this, to think, or how prepare
To make it great and good and true,
There's scarce a word for men like you.
Oh yes, we celebrate in May,
We're dumb as clams, Dominion Day.
Thus recent years would seem to teach
That people here would rather reach
For something distant, light as air,
Than heart and soul in glory share
Of living in the finest spot
Of this broad earth; for such their lot.

Now is this not a picture true?
To what think you can it be due?
One thing's quite plain and clearly seen,
In cause of this, strong factor's been;
It is the everlasting song
To closer union to belong,
Whilst true and vital core and heart
Of what to us should joy impart,
To make our own fine home domain
In ev'rything her best attain,
Seems lost in dreaming of some thing
That daunts imagination's wing.
The beacon star of ideals true
Has grown less plain indeed to view,
Seems dim and dimmer to become
Since beating of Imperial drum;
The people have been mystified
By double country thus implied.

A noble start our country made,
Foundation well indeed was laid;

But 'tis quite clear that there be some
Whom cast-off garments best become;
They'd have us back to babyhood
Among all Britain's lusty brood;
Then rouse yourselves till ev'ry plot
To shear us of our happy lot,
To stunt our growth, or shrink our powers,
Be harmless made as gentle showers.
We'll show that men of the North we be,
Canadians all, on land or sea.

To men from Britain's isles, who spring
No need of liberty to sing;
'Mong you the better element
Would scorn to weave one filament
Which would unite to anything
That could aught less of freedom bring;
No, friends, do not fear them, for they
Freedom-cradled are; now lead the way
Ye patriots true; we will, like you,
Be freemen strong and brave and true.
Let us above all faction rise,
Then raise our standard to the skies
And write upon it: 'no surrender';
What's plainly ours we will not render.
The march of progress and of light
Will be the swifter for our fight.
Let's undismayed work on for good
Of our own land, which always should
From us, first care, you'll grant, enlist,
If not in vague imperial mist
You grope; 'tis clear we first should do
The duty that to self is due.—
Did you e'er see a manly man
To his own mother falseness plan?

The bond of love to make more plain
They'd bind us with an irksome chain;
Thus burdened, would our ship of state
Sail forth to an unhappy fate;
Like floating kite that in midair,
Doth strain and strain the line to tear,—
This done, quick tumbling comes to ground

From whence it rose, till a new start's found;
So she, hard tugging to proceed,
Makes fruitless efforts to succeed
In breaking from those weighted ties,
To sail in free and brighter skies,
But daunted, fails to journey on
Until both weight and tie are gone;
This done, she, broken and outworn,
By adverse storms of faction torn,
To blunder back would fated be;
To cross anew the wide, lone sea
With freedom's sail tied to her mast
On calmer voyage bent at last.

Again I say, my brothers all,
Awake, awake at duty's call.
You who from sturdy British stock
Do spring, you would not have the clock
Turned back; to halt or retrograde
You nevermore would give your aid;
Nor yet would you, kind Gallic friends,
To whom I now would make amends
For nigh forgetting that 'twas you
From Europe's shores did first come through;
Th' Atlantic's waves your fathers braved
And grandly you the country saved,
And showed your faith in Britain's flag
By noble deed, not fulsome brag;
We welcome you, O gallant band,
Of pleasing tongue of Talleyrand.
And you that hap of other line,
German, Scandinavian and in fine,
What strain or origin you claim,
But now a common country name,
Again I say, awake and note
The task that's yours; and con by rote
What's doing here; watch them that steer;
See that they're men who'd scorn to veer
From proper course; who'll guide the helm
So treach'rous waves can not o'erwhelm;
Who'll safely pass through surging storm
Of factions; who will not conform
To aught that would the country shame;
Who'd scorn to stain their own good name.

Yea, friends, there's much to do indeed;
For light and truth to spread there's need;
The people should be straightway told
To waken from indiff'rence cold,
That they may learn to use their voice
With wisdom true in making choice
Of men* who make the nation's laws;
The need is great, indeed, to pause
From drifting on without concern,
And diligently set to learn
What would be best for country's weal;
Then choose men sound and true and leal,
Men who for country's good would strive,
Men—Christian men, awake, alive.
'Tis sad to think how little heed
The people pay to this great need;
Our parliament is filled with men,
Of whom are some within our ken
That never would have been elected
Had real high standard been expected;
To draw their pay, to vote as told,
Their labor's sum we here behold.
Just think how recently they planned
That they should have, the times demand,
Four thousand dollars in round sum
And more, no doubt, ere long to come,
For their great service to the state;
Thus highly they themselves do rate.
Yet, let it be from housetops thundered,
It would tax some to earn four hundred
If given space of one whole year
In which to gain the sum named here;
Compatriots, shall this brazen theft
Go on—through men of shame bereft,
While thousands toil and moil to win
A living bare, this country in?

Alas! that in this virgin clime,
Unmarred by curse from feudal time,
We yet do find a spirit grown
We fondly hoped was here unknown;
That would with privilege endow

* Or women

A class to whom the rest should bow,
That would the rich still richer make,
From poor e'en means of life would take.
The same proud class would arrogate
For all the rest to legislate;
They would the country's very life
Destroy, and wage ignoble strife
'Gainst every sentiment of pride
That doth in patriots' hearts reside,
Would cry 'disloyalty' and shout
With lying lips their insults out.
Good friends, how can we yet refrain
From manifesting hot disdain
At taunting hints that we're unfit
Our land to rule, and care for it!—
In peace or war, on land or sea,
Strong, sturdy men of the north are we.—

Let those that govern would and guide
Be firmly told we will not bide
Attempts to clip, and carve and pare
The legislative rights we share;
By dastard scheme, for faction's sake,
What's dearly prized from us to take;
Comrades, shall we such shame endure,
Shall we be forced to forfeiture,
To degradation and disgrace,
By men who know not how to trace
The duty of the hour! Let's rise
And show how much our hearts despise,
How we in inmost soul detest
The base, the cowardly behest
That Canada shall be held up
To drink the bitter, baneful cup
Of humiliation and of shame;
With scorn resent, in Heaven's name,
This thing that e'en the very base
Of this nation's structure would displace.

But peace to my perturbed heart;
'Tis painful to endure the smart
These thoughts of ills impending bring,
But hope will, freed from fear, yet spring;

Yea, we may trust the better sense
Of men who're true to right's defense;
The days of peril will soon be past,
For nation strong the mould be cast
By men who'll time's true signs discern
And threat'nings into blessings turn.
Peace too, we say, to all that love
The land all minor ties above,
That strive the patriot flame to guard
In hearts from which all guile is barred.
Truth mighty is and will prevail,
Nor can deceit or noise avail
With patriot's heart in any clime,
When rooted in a love sublime;
Canada, O Canada, thou fair,
Thou'rt free, and free as thy pure air
Thou shalt forever be; no dream
Of proud Napoleonic scheme,
No system, urged by puling man,
That's built on stern Cæsarian plan,
Can satisfy thy buoyant heart;
Nor will true loyal minds depart
From course that through wise statesmen's skill,
Thy larger wants will truly fill.
No commonwealth e'er could endure
With common rights left insecure;
Where equal statehood doth reside,
Alone, true trust and faith abide;
Each state must work in its own sphere,
A structure sound and true to rear.

Yea, then shall this our grand Dominion,
Safe poised on freedom's fearless pinion,
Arise, to play her splendid part
In onward march of peaceful art;
And then her noble purpose reach,
Model true to all of Saxon speech.
On truth and right she'll glory shed;
No more will traitor raise his head;
With great achievements she shall ring
And poets rise to gladly sing
Her people's virtues and her strength
In ev'ry zone throughout her length;

Extol her lavish nature's gift;—
The mountains grand that tow'ring lift
Their snowy peaks beyond the clouds,
To clear blue skies where naught enshrouds,
The streams and lakes, green slopes and woods,
Their variant charms through nature's moods,
Plains that to distant skies expand,
Where stately maples, beauteous stand,
In garb superb of summer's green,
Or gorgeous, glowing, autumn sheen;
The feathered tribes' sequestered homes,
The hidden ways where wild life roams,
Steep hill, deep glen, and tangled wild,
In sportman's lore, a paradise styled,
And sea-like prairie, spreading wide,
With fields of waving wealth supplied.

This vision bright of future fame
We soon shall reach with glad acclaim,
If we now make a proud decision
To enter on such noble mission;
With joy and peace and plenty then
Shall this great land of loyal men
Be strewn and blessed from shore to shore
—These tidings spread to ev'ry door.—
Thus God shall smile upon our land,
Set on firm rock, not shifting sand;
Great good to do, we'll make our aim,
No wrongs shall stain our honored name;
Our emblem evermore shall be
True symbol of true liberty.

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